

Literacy Strategy

Three-Level Study Guides

The three-level study guide (Herber, 1978) is one form of a study guide that helps students develop multiple levels of understanding when reading a text. This literacy strategy is extremely useful in helping students become critical thinkers as they develop independence in reading comprehension. The following steps facilitate developing and using a three-level study guide:

Developing and Using a Three-Level Study Guide

- Step 1:** **Analyze content and identify major concepts & important details**
- Step 2:** **Develop questions at multiple levels of understanding**
- EXPLICIT LEVEL - *Right on the Page*
 - IMPLICIT LEVEL - *Think and Search*
 - EXPERIENCE-BASED - *On Your Own*
- Step 3:** **Assign the study guide and engage students in small group discussions**

When developing the three-level study guide, the teacher begins with a process of content analysis. Through this process the teacher analyzes and identifies the major concepts and important details that students need to identify from their reading. In this way the teacher is identifying what the students need to know.

In the second step of creating the study guide, the teacher develops questions at three levels of understanding. In this part of the process, she wants the students to appreciate explicit questions that are found “right on the



page”; implicit questions that require the student to think and search for the answer by “reading between the lines”; and questions that are experience-based or require students to read “beyond the lines” and use their prior knowledge.

In the third step of the strategy, the three-level study guide is assigned and students work in small discussion groups as they determine how they will respond to each of the questions.



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